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EYES ALONE

Mr. L

6 September 1949

Chief, Contact Branch, OO

Nikolai M. POPPE

1. In early June 1949, Alien Section received information to the effect that Mr. Carmel Offie, OPC, was arranging an exclusive press break for Dr. Nikolai M. POPPE through personal friends in the TIME-LIFE Corporation. At this time, Dr. POPPE was held under deep cover, using a pseudonym exclusively, and being prevented from any contact with friends and acquaintances in the US. The action taken to expose Dr. POPPE to the press appeared to be extremely injudicious at the time. The matter was brought to the attention of Mr. OPC, who agreed with this viewpoint and expressed his intention of doing all in his power to prevent such a development.

2. On 1 September 1949, Mr. Offie visited Dr. POPPE. Mr. John Chamberlain, a reporter for LIFE Magazine, accompanied Mr. Offie for the purposes of questioning Dr. POPPE. Dr. POPPE has repeatedly expressed his wish not to be interviewed by the press. During the course of the interview, Dr. POPPE was asked to supply information to the reporter. He replied that this information had been given in confidence to the US Government, and he would not be willing to give it to the press unless Mr. Offie directly advised him to do so. Dr. POPPE explained that he did not consider it in the best interests of the US that this information should be publicly printed. At this point, Mr. Offie apparently told the reporter that he could see the reports referred to if he visited Mr. Offie's office.

3. On 2 September 1949, an employee of this Branch visited Dr. POPPE, and was informed of the above events. Dr. POPPE, who was very disturbed by the whole affair and considered himself betrayed, was reassured that none of his reports would be available to any member of the press or the public. However, this appears to be the second attempt to give an exclusive break to LIFE at Dr. POPPE'S expense and in direct contravention to Dr. POPPE'S wishes. The result has been unfortunate both to our relations with Dr. POPPE and to Dr. POPPE'S confidence in the integrity and maturity of the US Government.

4. This office has been handling Dr. POPPE both as service to OPC and for the purpose of providing intelligence reports to pertinent government agencies. The questioning of Dr. POPPE was based on requirements from practically all of the intelligence agencies, including the covert offices of CIA. Thus, the reports obtained contain material that is classified not only because of intelligence information, but also because of operational information.

5. It is our practice to instill confidence and cooperation in our sources by assuring them that any reports derived from our contact with them will be treated with absolute discretion and will be seen by authorized officials only, as well as the gradual development of mutual good faith in all dealings. It is our confirmed opinion that the quality and quantity of the reportable material we receive is in large part ascribable to the confidence our sources have in our discretion. Our relations with them are therefore extremely important to us.

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6. We would appreciate written confirmation of the oral agreement made on 2 September 1949 between Mr. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Offie, that all information submitted to LIFE Magazines be first cleared through this Branch. We would also appreciate being informed in advance of any future contacts with a source we are handling, and the nature of such contacts.

LYMAN B. KIRKPATRICK

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